

Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) released the following statement regarding the Interior-Environment Appropriations bill that is being marked up in Subcommittee:

“The Interior-Environment Appropriations bill being marked up in Subcommittee today represents an abdication of responsibility on the part of the federal government. Not only does the bill cut funding for clean air, clean water and protection of public lands, but in numerous areas it actually undermines the role of the federal government in protecting our nation’s environment and public health.

“The devastating cuts to the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs), the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the National Park Service, EPA’s operating budget, the Interior Department’s oversight budget for offshore oil drilling and more will leave communities around the country struggling to provide services to their citizens and even to comply with federal laws.

“In Oregon, the cuts to public lands funding in this bill could mean missed opportunities to protect special places in the Columbia River Gorge and elsewhere in the state. In many cases, these cuts will also cripple local economies – studies have shown that every \$1 billion invested in water infrastructure creates between 20,000-26,000 jobs. This bill cuts almost \$1 billion from the SRFs, which help states finance federally mandated upgrades and repairs to water and sewer systems. It will put additional pressure on already tight local budgets as well as potentially increasing water and sewer rates, which would be an extreme hardship in cities like Portland that have already seen water rates skyrocket in recent years.

“The policy riders in this spending bill can only be described as fulfilling special interest wish list. From blocking clean air regulations and oversight of mining to preventing Federal action to clarify the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act to a new moratorium on listing wildlife under the Endangered Species Act, this bill implements what polluting industries have been asking for. The bill would even allow new hard rock mining around the Grand Canyon.

“If this bill comes to the Floor, I will strongly oppose it and urge my colleagues to do the same.”